

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

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R 201119Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2923

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT, CE

SUBJ: UNP LEADER JAYEWARDENE AND EIGHT OTHERS TO CONTEST
COLOMBO SOUTH SEAT

REF: COLOMBO 1546

1. ACCOMPANINED BY ROWDY CROWD, UNITED NATIONAL PARTY (UNP) LEADER J.R. JAYEWARDENE FILED NOMINATION PAPERS JUNE 19 FOR JULY 18 BY-LECTION FOR COLOMBO SOUTH SEAT IN NATIONAL STATE ASEMBLY (NSA). EIGHT INDEPENS DENTS ALSO FILED. VACANCY WAS CREASED MAY 14 WHEN JAYEWRDENE RESINGED SEAT IN NSA TO PROTEST EXTENSION PRESENT NSA BEYOND FIVE-YEAR TERM. (REFTEL) PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE HAS LABELLED JAYEWARDENE'S RESIGNATION A "STUNT" AND ADVISED JAYEWARDENE INSTEAD TO "STAY HOME" FOR TWO YEARS.

2. UNITED FRONT (UF) COALITION DECIDED NOT TO CONTEST SEAT AFTER MOVE TO BAR UNP LEADER FROM STANDING MET STRONG OPPOSITION FROM COALITION PARTNERS,LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY (LSSP) AND COMMUNIST PARTY, MOSCOW-WING (CP/M), WHO THOUGHT THEY MIGHT WANT TO DO SAME THING AT SOME FUTURE TIME. LSSP, WHICH HAS RIGHT TO PUT UP CANDIDATE UNDER COALTION AGREEMENT, DID NOT DO SO BECAUSE IT WAS AFRAID ANY CANDIDATE WOULD BE BADLY WHIPPED, DAMAGING PARTY'S PRESTIGE. PRIME
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MINISTER DID NOT BITE AT OSTENSIBLY FRIENDLY LSSP OFFER

TO ALLOW SLFP CANDIDATE TO RUN INSTEAD. SOME LIVENLINESS
PROMISTED BY FACT ONE INDEPENDENT, J.R.P. SURIYAPPERUMA,
WAS KICKED OUT OF UNP LESS THEN ONE MONTH AGO IN WAKE OF
UNCESSESSFUL PROTEST AGAINST JAYEWARDENE'S ALLEGED
DICTORIAL TACTIS. SURIYAPPERUMA'S CANDIDACY MAY
REVEAL WHETHER UNP'S INTERNAL DIFFERENCES AR AS GREAT
AS UF CLAIMS.

3. BEST GUESS AT PRESENT IS THAT JAYEWARDENE'S EARLIER THREAT
TO PULL ANY OR ALL UPN MPS OUT OF NSA IN PROTEST
AGAINST SEVEN-YEAR TENURE WILL BE FORGOTTEN UPON HIS OWN
RETURN TO NSA. ALTHOUGH LITTLE DOUBT EXISTS ABOUT
JAYEWARDENE'S COMMANDING SIZEABLE MAJORITY, UNP LEADERS
PRIVATELY ADMIT RESIGNATION STRATEGY HAD GENERATED
LITTLE POPULAR INTEREST UNTIL NOMINATION DAY,WHEN LARGE
CROWDS SURGED THROUGH POLICE LINES TO CHEER JAYEWARDENE.
DESPITE SERIES OF COLOMBO RALLIES, JAYEWARDENE'S MESSAGE
--THAT NSA NOW "LEGAL" BUT "ILLEGITIMATE" -- HAS THUS
FAR PROVIDED MORE CONFUSING THEN ELECTRIFYING. A FIELD
OF NINE CANDIDATES, MOSTLY FRIVOLOUS,MAY PROVIDE
ADDITIONAL DISTRACTION. NONETHELESS, CEYLONESE
RELISH ELECTIONS AND MAY, BY GIVING JAYEWARDENE LARGE MAJORITY,
SUPPORT HIS CONTENTION THAT SEEKING A PARLIAMENTARY MANDATE
AFTER FIVE YEARS IS RIGHT THING TO DO.
VAN HOLLEN

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